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HB 2245
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR A STUDY
TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF CLEANING THE ALA WAI CANAL

Statement for
House Committees on
Ocean and Marine Resources
Water and Land Use
Public Hearing - February 2, 1990

By
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HB 2245 recognizes the potential value of the Ala Wai Canal as both a recreational and aesthetic resource but calls attention to the inability of the canal to achieve this full potential due to both its physical appearance and the presence of various pollutants. The bill would provide for an appropriation of \$800,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to determine the feasibility of cleaning the Ala Wai Canal and improving its water quality to a level compatible with water based recreational activities. A portion of the funds would be used to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

Our statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

It seems appropriate to offer some background information as to the basis for our particular interest and concurrence with the intent of this bill. As a researcher in the Oceanography Department and later with the Environmental Center of the University of Hawaii, I spent several years carrying out baseline ecological studies on the Ala Wai Canal beginning in 1969. In the early 1970's, the Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC), in response to a specific request by then Governor George Ariyoshi, came to the Environmental Center and requested that we undertake a study of ways to improve the Ala Wai Canal. In response to that request and with modest support from OEQC, we assembled a team of researchers who looked at various alternatives for improvement of the water quality of the Ala Wai Canal. The final report on that study was provided to OEQC in December 1976.

Since that study there have been a few other highly specific studies on various aspects of the Canal but no comprehensive, in depth technical analysis of the feasibility of cleaning the Ala Wai Canal.

It has been our belief that a clean, aesthetically pleasing Ala Wai Canal would provide an exceptionally attractive focus for recreational activities on the mauka side of Waikiki. With proper landscaping and a possible boardwalk extension of the existing sidewalk, walking, fishing, boating and canoeing activities would surely be enhanced. HB 2245 would provide the means by which the technical, economic, and environmental feasibility of this clean-up could be determined.